

IN MEMORIAM: DR. NORMAN LOFTUS BOR (1893-1972)

Dr. Norman Loftus Bor, formerly of the Indian Forest Service, and later Assistant Director, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, passed away on 22 December, 1972 at the age of 79. Dr. Bor had a very active career as a forest officer, administrator and researcher, but he will probably be remembered most for his contributions to the taxonomy of grasses.

Dr. Bor was born on 4 May 1893. He took his M.A. degree from the University of Dublin; later he underwent a course in forestry. From September 1914 to November 1919 he served in the First World War; he was with the Connaught Rangers in France and became a Captain. He joined the Indian Forest Service on 20 December 1921 as Assistant Conservator in Nowgong, Assam. In 1924 he became a Deputy Conservator-in-charge of Kamrup Division, in 1927 Working Plan Officer, Dhubri, and in 1930 W.P.O. Shillong. In view of his administrative abilities and knowledge of languages in addition to his duties as Forest Officer, he was appointed in 1931 as Political Officer, Balipara Frontier Tract, and in 1935 Deputy Commissioner of Kohima. In 1935, he became Botanical Officer and Silviculturist to Assam Government. In the same year he went to Kew for training in taxonomy of grasses for preparing an account on the grasses of Assam.

This appointment as Botanical Officer brought Dr. Bor closer to systematic botany, and in 1937 he became Forest Botanist at the Forest Research Institute, Dehra Dun; he held this post till 1942, and during his stay at Dehra Dun he was for some time the President, Forest Research Institute and Inspector General of Forests. From 1937 to 1942, Dr. Bor taught at the Indian Forest College, and was a very popular teacher. In 1942, Dr. Bor went back to serve the Forest Department of Assam and by

1945 became a Senior Conservator. The withdrawal of troops from Burma in 1942, and the threatened invasion of Assam led to hundreds of refugees pouring into Assam through Naga Hills. Dr. Bor offered his services to Government of India and was appointed Chief Administrator of Burma Refugee Organisation; later he became Director of Assam Relief Measures. These jobs demanded very hard work and qualities of organisation. In recognition of his services Dr. Bor was made a Companion of the Indian Empire.

Dr. Bor made extensive collections in the Indian subcontinent; his collections from Assam, NEFA, Lahul, Sikkim and Tibet are valuable treasures in the herbarium of The Forest Research Institute, Dehra Dun.

Dr. Bor's interests extended to general forest botany and ecology. His book *Manual of Indian Forest Botany* (1953) is a valuable reference book. Jointly with Shri M. B. Raizada, he published a series of articles on ornamental shrubs and climbers; these were later published in the form of a book entitled *Beautiful Indian Shrubs and Climbers*.



He published several papers on ecology. His presidential address in the Botany Section of Indian Science Congress at Baroda (1942) was on 'Ecology : theory and practice'. His doctorate was on 'Synecology of the Naga Hills' ; he also published works on relict vegetation of Aka Hills.

Dr. Bor retired from the Indian Forest Service in 1946. By this time, he had established his reputation in the taxonomy of grasses, and was appointed Assistant Director, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew.

Dr. Bor's interest in the taxonomy of grasses, initiated in 1936 lasted till his death. He published over one hundred research papers on this subject including several large works, namely *Flora of Assam, V. Gramineae* (1940), *Common Grasses of the United Provinces* (1941), *Grasses of Burma, Ceylon, India and Pakistan* (1960), *Grasses of Afghanistan* (1965) and *Grasses of Iraq* (1968). He was active till the end of his life, and he published a critical taxonomic note on grasses just few months (September 1972) before his death.

Dr. Bor earned numerous distinctions for his valuable contributions to botany, in the fields of ecology and forestry. He was awarded the D. Sc. degree of the University of Edinburgh, Fellowships of the National Institute of Sciences, Royal Society of Edinburgh, Linnean Society, London, and elected President of the Botany Section of the Indian Science Congress and the Indian Botanical Society. He was the recipient of the Paul Johannes Bruhl Memorial Medal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal.

Dr. Bor was very human and humorous. Innumerable instances of his personal benevolence, jovial disposition and witty conversations are narrated by Mrs. Bor, a true companion and who predeceased her husband in her book *Adventures of a Botanist's wife*.

Dr. Bor had very wide correspondence with agrostologists and taxonomists ; he used to write a very bold hand with big and long loops and connectives, sometimes covering a whole page. Dr. N. L. Bor will be remembered for long for his service to Indian Forestry and much more for his magnificent and voluminous work on the grasses of this subcontinent.

*Botanical Survey of India
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LIST OF PUBLICATIONS OF DR. N. L. BOR

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| <p>1935
The conifers of the Balipara Frontier Tract, Assam. <i>Ind. For.</i> 61 : 313-319.</p> <p>1936
A transfrontier tour in the Naga Hills. <i>Ind. For.</i> 62 : 69-79.</p> <p>1938
The vegetation of the Nilgiris. <i>Ind. For.</i> 64 : 600-609.
A list of the grasses of Assam. <i>Ind. For. Rec.</i> (n.s.) Bot. 1(3) : 47-102.
A sketch of the vegetation of the Aka hills, a synecological study. <i>Ibid.</i> 1 : 103-221.</p> <p>1939-48
Some beautiful Indian Climbers & Shrubs. <i>J. Bombay nat. Hist. Soc.</i> 41 : 1-11, 203-220, 1940 ; 41 : 453-460, 42 : 1-12, 1941 ; 42 : 233-241, 685-697, 698-703, 1942 ; 43 : 1-10, 115-129, 291-297, 539-552, 1943 ; 44 : 159-163, 1944 ; 44 : 315-321, 499-505, 45 : 1-8, 1945 ; 45 : 97-105, 263-279, 1946 ; 46 : 1-12, 205-216, 411-413, 1947 ; 46 : 567-575, 47 : 1-25, 195-196, 401-408, 1948.
A note on <i>Hypparrhenia griffithii</i> Bor. <i>Ind. For.</i> 65 : 86-88.
A new genus & species of Caryophyllaceae. <i>Ibid.</i> 65 : 611-613.</p> <p>1940
Three new genera of Indian grasses. <i>Ind. For.</i> 66 : 267-72.
A note on <i>Ischaemum robustum</i> Hook f. <i>Ibid.</i> 66 : 333-334.
A note on <i>Deyeuxia munroi</i> (Boiss.) Bor. <i>Ibid.</i> 66 : 418-420.
The genus <i>Hystrix</i> Moench. in India. <i>Ibid.</i> 66 : 543-545.
<i>The Flora of Assam, Vol. 5 (Gramineae)</i>, Calcutta.
Recent changes in the names of Indian grasses. <i>Curr. Sci.</i> 9 : 431-432.</p> | <p>1941
Common Grasses of the United Provinces. <i>Indian For. Rec.</i> (n.s.) Bot. 2 : 1-220. <i>Phalaris paradoxa</i> Linn. <i>Ind. for.</i> 67 : 559-561. <i>Thyrsostachys oliveri</i> Gamble. <i>Ind. For. Rec.</i> (n.s.) Bot. 2(2) : 221-225. New Indian & Burmese species. <i>Ibid.</i> 3(5) : 144-150.</p> <p>1942
Some remarks upon the geology and the flora of the Naga and Khasi Hills. <i>150th Ann. Vol. roy. bot. Gdn., Calcutta</i>, 129-135. The relict vegetation of the Shillong Plateau, Assam, <i>Ind. For. Rec.</i> (n.s.), 3 : (6) : 152-195.
The genus <i>Aeluropus</i> in India. <i>Ibid.</i> 68 : 293-299.
A new grass from the Himalaya. <i>Ibid.</i> 68 : 355-356.
<i>Rhynchelytrum</i> Nees and <i>Tricholaena</i> Schrad. in India. <i>Ibid.</i> 68 : 523-530.</p> <p>1946
A new species of <i>Dactyloctenium</i> from India. <i>Blumea</i>, Suppl. 3 : 44.</p> <p>1948
<i>Arundinella pumila</i> (Hochst.) Steud. and <i>Arundinella pygmaea</i> Hook. f. <i>J. Ind. bot. Soc.</i> 27 : 61.
<i>Arundinella villosa</i> Arn. ex Steud. <i>Ibid.</i> 27 : 63.
<i>Castellia Tinco</i> in India. <i>Ind. For.</i> 74 : 90-92.
A new species of <i>Deyeuxia</i> from Persia. <i>Kew Bull.</i> 1948 : 42.
Dr. Stocks' <i>Sporobolus</i> from Sind. <i>Ibid.</i> 1948 : 45.
New species of <i>Poa</i> from India, Burma & Tibet. <i>Ibid.</i> 1948 : 138-144.
<i>Narenga fallax</i> (Balansa) Bor. <i>Ibid.</i> 1948 : 162.
<i>Bhidea</i> Stapf ex Bor : a new genus of grasses from India. <i>Ibid.</i> 1948 : 445-447.</p> |
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